

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: **Gray Flycatcher** (*Empidonax wrightii*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): **One; almost certainly a male given frequent vocalizations and song phrases**
3. Parish: **Plaquemines**
Specific Locality: **Diamond**
4. Date(s) when observed: **26 January** (<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S52097382>) and **10 February 2019** (<https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S52595556>)
5. Time(s) of day when observed: **morning.**
6. Reporting observer and address: **Van Remsen (LSUMNS)**
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): **Michele McLindon, Marky Mutchler, Jack Rogers, David Muth, Mark Meunier; Dan Lane, Eamon Corbett, Alec Cowles, Cameron Rutt, Timothy White**
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): **m.ob**
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): **at initial detection, poor light, but much better later in AM as cloud ceiling lifted and it got much brighter.**
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): **10X40 binos**
11. Distance to bird(s): **eventually as close as 10 feet**
12. Duration of observation: **at least 45minutes on 26 Jan.**

13. **Habitat:** unused camper-trailer park borderer by scrubby woods. Bird spent almost all time in either the dead ragweed stalks along the edge or in scattered young live oaks on lawn.

14. **Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):** **Actively** sallying to ground and vegetation from ragweed stalks, outer edge of live oaks, and even from trailer hook-up posts. Vocalized occasionally on first date, with some song phrases; on second visit, frequently vocalizing.

15. **Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):** While we were searching the old trailer park area, Michele McLindon called my attention to a bird that she said kind of looked like a phoebe but wasn't one. As soon as I saw it, I confirmed to her that it was indeed not a phoebe but a "really good western empid." I could see that it was a dull grayish empid. We kept our distance (ca. 30 yards), however, because we were concerned that the bird would do the usual empid thing by disappearing at slightest provocation. I immediately tried to get distant photos and video, and called Marky and Jack over, and both of them agreed with me that it was a "good Western empid" and not any species of Eastern empid. As we gradually risked getting closer (at this point we had no idea how unusually tame the bird would be!), I could see the shape and colors better and thought it might be a Dusky. I immediately called David Muth, who was birding nearby with Mark Meunier, to tell him we had a probable Dusky and to come ASAP. We hung back to avoid scaring the bird before they arrived. David and Mark showed up very quickly and began to approach the bird with us; we now needed better looks and photos. Shortly thereafter it finally all clicked for me: the bird was pumping its tail downward; the bill was longish with a yellowish mandible; and the tail was longish. "It's a Gray Flycatcher!" I proclaimed, while realizing I should have caught on to it being a Gray much sooner but was leaning towards Dusky because the colors were "too rich"; however, that was because I was thinking worn spring-summer GRFL, not a relatively fresh-plumaged bird. As the bird allowed us to get closer and closer, the more obvious it was that it was a Gray by the combination of behavior, shape, and coloration. Then, we tried playback of Gray and got an immediate response that was a perfect match.

This bird proved to be unusually cooperative over the ensuing weeks and several diagnostic recordings were made, as well as photos and video

16. **Voice:** Rather than lamely describe the voice, I refer you to the recordings that were made, including tapes embedded in 26 Jan. list by Marky and Jack. Calls and song phrases match Gray perfectly.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): [see above](#).
[Downward tail-pumping and vocalizations diagnostic](#).

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): [Yes, see eBird lists, including links to video](#). [A few of my best are attached](#)

19. Previous experience with this species: [Seen perhaps only a few dozen times, mostly long ago, as breeders in PJ woodland in Southwest and occasional migrants in lowlands. Seen one previous time in winter, but not well.](#)

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: [None, other than playback of GRFL songs and calls](#)

b. after observation: [none](#)

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	See eBird list
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? [Yes](#). If not, explain:

23. Date: [27 Feb. 2019](#)

Time: [10 PM](#)

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? [YES](#)

If yes, may we include your name with the report? [YES](#)